they owe no particular debt.

A contract binds a manager more than it binds the actor, for this reason: If the manager breaks his agreement, the actor can sue him with a reasonable chance of success; but if the actor breaks his contract, what can the manager do about it? Frequently the actor has no permanent abode and little tangible property. It is true that the manager might get a permanent injunction restraining the actor from working under any other management; but it is difficult to get such an injunction, and useless to enforce it. If the manager gets the injunction and compels the actor to play, the latter, if he be mean or perverse, can ruin a performance in a way best known to himself. And what good would it do the manager simply to keep the actor out of work?

"Some 'artists' carry a line of druggists' supplies."

There are many honorable men and women in the profession who would not stoop to take any unfair advantage of a manager; but there are many others who have no such scruples. And it is unfortunately true that the rivalry among theatrical producers is such that a player who is disloyal to one manager is not likely on that account to be turned down by others. It may be that we managers are ourselves to blame for such lack of coöperation; but the scarcity of fine artists is such that the temptation to take a chance on the trustworthiness of a good performer is overwhelming.

It would be easy to point out a hundred cases where players have violated their agreements without any compunction. Recently an actress who was specially fitted for the leading feminine role in a very important dramatic production, and had for months understood that she was to appear in this play, and seemed grateful for the opportunity to distinguish herself, calmly announced after weeks of rehearsal and less than ten days before the opening night that she had signed a contract with another firm. Happily it was possible to replace her within twenty-four hours with another artist of equal ability. Can one be blamed, in these circumstances, for a certain bitterness?

This case—because the change occurred before the première—was not so bad as many other cases I could point out of important players who actually deserted companies thousands of miles from home, and brought disaster not only to the management but to the other players in the company.

THE men and women of the stage who are the least trustworthy are always the foremost in airing their alleged grievances; but I do not believe there is any other profession in which so much money is paid for average ability. Actors and actresses, either dramatic or musical, of any moderate talent, are seldom unemployed during the regular theatrical season, after they have once got some start in their work. And the months or years spent in making that first start are neither so long nor so hard as the years of labor that confront the writer, the painter, the sculptor, the doctor, the lawyer, the engineer, and even the ordinary business man. The preparation required is trivial compared with the years of study through which the ordinary professional man must pass before the government authorities will even allow him to try to find customers. If the man or woman who goes on the stage has sufficient personality, good looks, or ability to justify the choice of this career, the road to success is not arduous, and the reward is very liberal.

"The stenographer's dream."

The work of giving eight performances a week is in most instances not more than enough effort to keep the player in good health. In fact, many able and more intelligent players find time to earn money at various other occupations while they are also playing. One of the chief side lines carried by the subordinate actor is the selling of New York suburban real estate.

Actors have long claimed that they should be paid during rehearsals. This might be right if the actor would work for the wages he might earn in other walks of life with equivalent ability. By the present scale of wages the actor as a rule gets all and more than he is entitled to. True, a production will sometimes be a failure, and the actor's engagement will consequently be cut short; but this element of risk is a part of the business, and was well understood by him when he elected to go on the stage.

What the actor loses through having speculated on a few weeks of rehearsal time is nothing compared with the settlement that the manager has to make for all the expenses of putting on the production. And if the actor has shown himself to have value and patience, the manager will do his best to find him another opportunity. If a rehearsal period has been unusually long, some of the actors themselves have often been to blame. The longer the rehearsal period the greater the expense for the manager, as he wants to get his production before the public as soon as possible and in such a manner as to give it the best chance of succeeding.

A favorite complaint of the actress is that she has to pay for her own gowns. This applies, under first-class managements, only to women who are earning considerable money, and when the gowns are such modern costumes as will be part of her stock in trade in the unhappy event of a failure. Such gowns are the only contribution the woman brings to the theater apart from her personality, ability, and experience. They are her property, and the scale of wages is adjusted on a basis that certainly demands some equipment other than the mere presence of the performer. In many cases these gowns, especially suitable to the appearance of the woman, constitute one of her most valuable assets; not only with the manager, but with the public from which the money that pays her salary must come.

WE have said a good deal about salaries, which raises the question as to what they actually are. In regard to some salaries the public is incredulous. They seem almost impossible! But the funny part of it is that they are real and not bluff at all. Many times we have had salary lists so high—the result of our desire to uphold standards and win the favor of critics and public—that the productions have often failed to earn any profit.

To start with, the chorus girl gets anywhere from twenty to forty dollars a week. The lowest price named is three times what many equally attractive and far more industrious and deserving girls get in all sorts of stores and mercantile establishments. For twenty dollars a week one can get an A-1 stenographer or a bookkeeper who will exercise a degree of care and intelligence that makes the effort of the chorus girl comic by contrast. A woman who earns forty dollars a week in an office must be a wonder in her special work, and will be an almost indispensable cog in the wheels of that particular industry. For that matter, a newspaper man who earns that amount of money on anything but a metropolitan daily must be even more than a star reporter. The mechanic who gets that much must be skilled indeed. The fact that the stage person draws salary for only about thirty weeks a year is more than balanced by the higher salary she receives, to say nothing of the long rest she has for recuperation.

Just now a number of stars are getting from two thousand to three thousand dollars a week, and a whole constellation of stellar lights get salaries ranging from six hundred to a thousand. Leading men and women, not stars at all, get anywhere from one hundred and fifty to three hundred and fifty dollars a week. If they fail to accumulate fortunes, whose fault is it?

Sometimes, when I look over the salary lists of companies, I wish that it had been my fate not to manage, but to act. It is enough to make one thoughtful!

It is not the fault of actors if they are overpaid, but their good fortune; but it is their fault if they are ungrateful. For several seasons one of the favorite enterprises of our firm was a company in which we took much pride, which seemed to please the critics and the public to an unusual degree. This organization was so handled and exploited that it became famous, and several actors—who had been of little importance before they were identified with it—became known from New York to San Francisco. The salaries were liberal; but they could not all be princely. That company, though it was kept employed practically the year round, with almost no rehearsal periods, had to be abandoned because almost everybody in it suddenly decided that he or she was entitled to about fifty per cent. increase in salary. The company could not be held together at any figure that would make it a sane speculation.

Managers have been charged with cutting down salaries after a production has made a New York sensation. The truth is more often that certain salaries in the company have to be substantially increased under the threat of the actors to accept other engagements. It seems almost impossible that the artists should have so little feeling about the production itself, so little sense of being identified with the undertaking, so little foresight in not appreciating that the very next venture may be a complete failure.

Usually when the actor makes a personal hit he takes all the credit to himself. He forgets the caution with which the piece has been selected, the expert stage direction under which he has been trained for his role, the skill with which he has been advertised and called to the notice of theatergoers. He is quite satisfied that he owes it all to himself alone, and he acts on that theory. Yet every playgoer knows how a good actor may fail utterly in a bad play, or even in a fairly good play in which he has been unwisely cast, or which has not been skilfully rehearsed and presented.

"Temperament—personality—ambition."

IF you do not believe that the producing manager has his troubles, just hire two or three thousand actors for a season, and see what it feels like! Make two or three thousand individual contracts with "temperaments" and "personalities" and "ambitions," and see whether you can keep your brow unruffled! Listen to the complaints, and see whether your sense of humor will always triumph!

Have you ever tried a little argument with ten players on the subject of the exact order in which their names shall appear on a poster? Have you ever attempted to define the respective importance of a star and the player who is to be featured at the head of the supporting company in every and all particulars? Have you ever tried to convince a leading woman that the stage manager knows just a little something about how a production should be staged, and that the author may possibly have the right conception of a character that he has created? Have you been confronted with the absurd little task of explaining how the dramatic editor of a certain newspaper decided to interview somebody else for the Sunday paper?

When all these things have been done you may find it a diversion to argue about the nature of the part that this particular player is to assume three years from date, and to make a ruling as to just what equipment and personal luxuries the management shall provide for such and such an artist on tour. This is to make no mention of that one choice discussion which—like the poor—is always with us, How shall the dressing rooms be alloted?

These are all samples of the trivial, but very essential, annoyances that constantly interrupt the more serious business of the day concerning such large affairs as the selection of plays, the organization of companies, the arranging of routes, and the building and operation of theaters. But, though these annoyances seem so small, they must all, or nearly all, come to the personal attention of the manager. This is not because other people in the office are not competent to handle the situation, but because each "artist" considers himself or herself above dealing with subordinates, and under the personal direction of the chief himself.

"And the musician is an artist!"

The musician, again, is an "artist"! Those who have listened to the best available orchestras, even under the leadership of able musical directors, may make their own deductions. Some of them are artists, and it is only fair to say that most of the difficulties that do arise are because of the agitators, rather than because of the men themselves.

But "art," as applied to business, is a fearful and a wonderful thing!